

Pastor and People.

LOOK UP, NOT DOWN.

Life to some is full of sorrow—
Half is real, half they borrow;
Full of rocks and full of ledges,
Corners sharp, and cutting edges.
Though the joy bells may be ringing,
Not a song you'll hear them singing;
Seeing never makes them wise,
Looking out from downcast eyes.

All in vain the sun is shining,
Waters sparkling, blossoms twining;
They but see through these same sorrows
Sad to-days and worse to-morrows;
See the clouds that must pass over;
See the weeds among the clover—
Everything and anything
But the gold the sunbeams bring.

Draining from the bitter fountain,
Lo! yon molehill seems a mountain;
Drops of dew and drops of rain
Swell into the mighty main.
All in vain the blessings shower,
And the mercies fall with power,
Gathering chaff, ye tread the wheat,
Rich and loyal, 'neath your feet.

Let it not be so, my neighbour;
Look up, as you love and labour.
Not for one alone woe's trials—
Every one has cares and trials.
Joy and pain are linked together,
Like the fair and cloudy weather;
May we have—O! let us pray—
Faith and patience for to-day.

—The Advance.

TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETIES.

Oral addresses have never fully met the necessities of the world. The words of God and man must be written. From stone and pottery, we have advanced to the abundant facilities and provisions of the present. All nations are now practically contiguous, and the religious treasures of each are available for all. By the aid of Publishing Societies, the press has become the right hand of power to tolling missionaries, and it also so ministers in comforting and building up believers, that no work in the world to-day surpasses in importance, or out-ri-vals in helpfulness, that which is accomplished by Tract and Book Societies. The supply has been enormous, yet the demand is still unlimited. The founders of the societies which pour healthful currents of literature into the busy world, are benefactors of their race.

The American Tract Society, now sixty-eight years old, is a noble pattern of these useful organizations. It has found ceaseless opportunity to test and prove the power and value of Scripture truth. In lonely wastes or crowded apartments, in the abodes of poverty or of wealth, in prison or hospital, in peace and war—into the midst of all experiences of life it has gone, with its messages of salvation, seeking the lost souls, and never content until it has found them. Its zeal for souls is quickened by the blessing of God hitherto given to its work. The hum of its presses has grown into a chorus of redeemed souls, and the murmur of its traffic into exultant praise. The dollar of the farmer it changes into seeds for a spiritual harvest, makes self-denial to produce spiritual fortunes, causes gold to stand up in the form of a man, walk into the mines whence it was dug, and melt hearts through divine power, and stamp them with the image of God. It makes money speak in divers tongues, with apostolic power. It makes the sufferer oblivious of pain, and puts words of ecstasy on the lips of the dying. The saloon-keeper and the drunkard, the capitalist and the labourer, the sailor and the soldier, the miner and the lumberman, have been objects of its care, and recipients of God's bounty for lost men. It has esteemed nobody beneath its notice, too sinful for its messages, too remote for its journeys, too defiant for its courage, or too hostile for its greetings and its Gospel call.

The existence of these societies to-day rests upon the living need of the day. They cannot yet be discharged as though their work was done. All other agencies combined, do not, and cannot supply the need.

There is still a vital necessity for religious literature. A demoralizing and infidel press pours forth a steady current of infected thought, into homes and minds and hearts. It is the drainage from the areas of sin and misery, of doubt and skepticism. The golden tide, leaving its rich deposit of blessing, is not enough to meet this malignant stream, with its defiling deposits. The single society alluded to above, has circulated 204,666,800 copies of its periodicals; but millions of children cry for a paper, and other adult millions long for some instructing word. Its colporteurs alone, have found 1,190,254 families in this favoured country, destitute of all religious books except the Bible, and over 700,000 Protestant families without even a Bible; and 16,000,000 volumes have been sold or given away in the homes of the needy; but the lack in millions of families within our borders, is simply appalling. New, living streams must constantly refresh and purify the stagnant life of the people.

a. The ignorance of spiritual truths makes Christian literature necessary.

There is no more natural knowledge of spiritual things to-day than there ever was. Men are not naturally disposed to love and obey God, easily and instantly; sin loads and crushes them. Our own land, consecrated to liberty and learning, where the school-house and the church have ever been companions, shows densest ignorance, in some sections, not only of primary learning and republican government, but also of the foundation principles of morality and religion. Ideas of God, His worship and service, of sin, and the Spirit's relation to God and man, of Jesus and His atonement, are as dim and vaporous as the unregulated thoughts of childhood, or the dull conceptions which ages of superstition have bequeathed to posterity. The oppressed and degraded, from other lands, that have found an asylum here, have brought the heritage of ignorance out of ages of mental bondage. A simple, plain, religious literature is an absolute necessity to meet this bewildering ignorance. Without knowledge of God and His salvation, there can be no useful and helpful citizenship. The country will mourn over its wretched population, and be unable to lift its besotted crowds, and fall at length, under their weight. The entrance of God's words gives light, and the papers, leaflets, tracts, books that fly from the presses of these various societies, are so many golden gleams that gladden the horizon, and herald the approaching day.

b. Wrong teaching calls for religious literature.

Error is broadcast by half-instructed teachers, and by open enemies of the truth. Wrong views of God, of sin, of salvation, and of judgment and its issues, are disseminated. The secular press often assumes the function of religious teacher, and presents forms of thought that would be ludicrous, if they were not tragic in their influence. Yet thousands accept them as the truth; superstitions abound; Bible truth, presented in such forms as will command attention, and secure perusal, is the only antidote for these gross errors. One cannot extinguish such baleful lights by any wholesale process of treatment. Carefully prepared religious literature must deal with these various forms of error, in efforts to correct and remove them.

c. False doctrine demands the antidote of religious literature.

In this free land, and in this generous age, all sorts of doctrine find eager advocates, and the millions who have come to our shores, have brought their own false ideas. The teachers of numerous false faiths, have the popular ear, and it is needful that the truth should chase the false doctrine into the darkness. Almost 700,000 people, from forty different nations, entering this country last year, were greeted at our portals with tracts, in their own languages, explaining the truths of our faith, and

presenting the salvation of the cross. Multitudes never attend or hear the instruction of ministers and teachers. Blatant infidels mock our sacred customs, and inflame the prejudices of the ignorant. They dwell upon the so-called mistakes of Moses, rather than the correct teaching of Jesus, the inconsistencies of Christians, rather than the devoted lives of the faithful. Error is presented in attractive forms, nostrums for the ills of the spirit, like quack medicines for the diseases of the body, are advertised in startling fashion. The ashes of a cremated woman, are divided among the populations of the world, to stimulate a theosophic faith; even here, the creed of Islam has its advocate, and Joss Houses abound. Sin is declared a disease, divine forgiveness unnecessary, the Bible a volume of only such authority as the consciousness of each man shall declare to him, the atonement in blood a relic of coarse barbaric thought, judgment a figment of fancy, and hell a nightmare or diabolic theology. All these, failing to meet our sins and sorrows, and our questions and fears, must be buried under the flood of literature, that contains the sweet, clear, heavenly, instructive Gospel of the Son of God. To stay the progress of this beneficent circulation, is to abandon a sinking ship in mid-ocean. The generous sentiment of the world cries out against it. The knowledge of the true God must remove the thought of idols, and the dreamy impossibilities of philosophy, and give its positive faith for the negations of atheism and agnosticism. The false doctrine of the world needs the truth. Religious literature is still a human requisite.

d. The era of doubt calls for religious literature.

It is a time of universal questioning. The ethnic contacts, and the studies of Christian scholars, have caused a kind of cosmic uncertainty, but not a loss of definite faith. Unrest begets unrest. The Church of Christ lacks aggressiveness and hesitates to claim its place as the one force for reforming and perfecting the world, new wonders come to light, opinions are held in reserve, and everything pertaining to God and man is made a subject of modern doubt and question. Yet the truth is unchanged as the everlasting hills; it shines like the stars, that do not change their places for the multiplied telescopes; it is the mind of the immutable God. This truth needs expression in innumerable forms, for all conditions of mental and spiritual life. To meet these questions and hush this disquiet. Since the hero of doubt scorns the Church and refuses the help of its services, the solution of his dilemmas must be put into his hand in convenient form, in befitting phrase, in fascinating and convicting truths.

The masses of the poor must be supplied with a neat, cheap literature, containing the best truths, the rich gems of Gospel comfort and grace, so that the facts of God may dispel doubt, and bring certainty to all the abodes of the world. The work of this society will not be done till all are thus supplied.

e. Devout Christians require religious literature.

God's children returning to Him in loving loyalty, continue here in the midst of perplexities, sorrows, and labours. Many of them are separated from friends and kindred, without church privileges, in poverty, or ill health, yet ever seeking grace for their day. For such, the numerous books and tracts written by the gifted children of the kingdom, are essential to spiritual comfort and growth. They carry the fragrance of the garden of the Lord into these homes, and quicken and increase every grace.

The abundant supplies for child life which this age makes a necessity—luring the youthful thought in the right direction, associating pleasant emotions with religious truth by pictures and bright and touching narrative, by cards of every kind for birthdays and holidays, enriching the Sunday-school

libraries, as well as the home shelves—make an additional bond of union between these societies and the wants of the world.

Religious literature has still a most important place in subserving all these varied wants; the Christian book and tract society is an absolute necessity, an unspeakable blessing. Its work is but just begun. Darkness broods over countless minds. Sounds of savagery are in the air. The demon of brutality chains the sons and daughters of God. Squalid poverty and hellish crimes mark the great centres of population. The throng of the godless steadily increases within the domain where God has planted this great society, with its literature and its workers.

But slowly the darkness is penetrated by the light, the songs of redemption drive out the bacchanals of the wicked, the ideas of righteousness displace the thoughts of evil, the noiseless structure rises on the unseen foundations, the kingdom of Christ is possessing the world. Its invisible agents are countless and resistless. The decree has been written that this world shall be given to Christ. The days of struggle hasten to the hour of victory. Truth printed, spoken, embodied, secures the alliance of Omnipotence. The patience of infinite forbearance will permit no hasty action, but at length the hour of Christ will come, and order will come from confusion, the forces of righteousness will emerge from obscurity, the glory of Christ will illumine the world, and the eternal celebration of his triumph over sin begin.

In that day, the workers and helpers of the American Tract Society, and others similar, shall not fail of their appropriate reward.

(Very much, if not all, that is said in this address, is equally true of the periodical religious press, the Church paper, for example, making its regular visits to the people's homes, bringing its pure and health-giving principles, and teachings of Christian life and instruction to the heart and conscience, warding off what is contaminating, and inspiring and encouraging, by precept and example, to all that is noblest and best in Christian living.—Ed.)

REVERENCE.

It has been charged—and there are fears that there is truth in the charge—that there is a growing irreverence among the youth of to-day; that there is not the same respect paid to the aged by the young as was done by their fathers and grandfathers. This is an age of youth. They are coming to the front in every department of life. Attention is paid to them, as was not done in former years, and in some instances perhaps, they turn aside from the older, and think they are sufficient unto themselves.

Is there a proper reverence felt and manifested towards God? We are afraid not, on the part of many. His name, or the name of some of His attributes, is often used in ordinary conversation in the most trifling manner. These are heard on every side as mere expletives, to express emotions of surprise or fear. There is a great deal of semi-profanity indulged in by professedly religious people.

This lack of reverence is frequently seen in the demeanor as some come into the house of God. Instead of seating themselves in a quiet, respectful manner, while a quiet prayer is offered for the blessing of God, light conversation is indulged in, diverting the mind and preventing the holy influences which belong to the service from finding a place to rest. During prayer many do not even assume a form of devotion, sit upright, eyes wandering all over the house; or they even engage in conversation with others beside them.

By many, such conduct is thought to be a sign of independence, of a mind emancipated from superstition and bigotry. It is not only irreverent, but it is an evidence of ill-breeding, a failure to comprehend the more common laws of polite society. Politeness demands that one shall conform to the rules and customs which govern the people where he is. One going into a church service should conform to the customs of that denomination, or else stay away from the service. If one were to accompany a delegation which had some request to make of an earthly ruler, and behave as some do when they are in the house of prayer, the probabilities are that he would soon be ejected by the servants of the household. Yet it is all right when it is the Almighty, who is approached?—Epworth Herald.